

# Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA  
Fourth Commandment: Honoring Our Fathers and Mothers

## Catechist Preparation

### Clarifying the Essentials

Relationships within a healthy family engender warm affection, respect, and mutuality among parents and children.

- Education in the faith begins in the earliest years with parents as the first evangelizers of their child; this fosters a child's growing relationship with Christ in the Church (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2225).
- Children help their parents grow in holiness as mothers and fathers respond to their needs generously and tirelessly (see CCC 2227).

The Fourth Commandment also illuminates the duties of civil authorities in that their responsibilities are carried out as civil *servants*.

- No one can demand of others what is contrary to their dignity as persons (see CCC 2235).
- The exercise of authority is meant to foster, serve, and assist life, the common good, and right relationships within society (see CCC 2237).

### Why Is This Important

Within the family, parents have an awesome duty and privilege in raising children and preparing them for their vocation in life. Children, in turn, draw out of responsible parents their best efforts. Assisted by God's grace, Scripture, prayer, and the celebration of the sacraments, families grow together in holiness as disciples of Jesus.

God gives us a share in his authority. Parents, teachers, and catechists nurture children under their charge. Similarly, civil servants nurture proper order and peaceful life in society.

*It's your parents you see  
when you first open your eyes,  
and it is their friendship that lays down  
the first strands of this life.*

SAINT AUGUSTINE

## Doctrinal Session Guide

(Approximately 60 minutes)

Have the space set with chairs in a circle. Establish a focal point with a candle, an open Bible, and a family picture. Provide name tags and refreshments.

### Welcome

Spend a few minutes in silence remembering family members, living and dead, and asking God to watch over them.

### Engage

1. Begin with the **Insight** section of the participant handout. Give everyone an opportunity to share what their family motto would say and why.
2. Continue with these or similar questions:

*When you hear the word "obey," what does it mean for you?*

*What do you understand by the Fourth Commandment's call to honor your parents?*

*In what way is this Commandment also a call to respect and obey the laws of the country?*

### Teach

Read and discuss each section of **Church Teaching**. Then summarize the following:

- Obeying rightful authority begins at an early age—first in the family, then in school, the neighborhood, and the nation.
- Obeying is more than following rules; it is living in right relationship with God and others.
- Mutual respect fosters healthy relationships between parent and child, teacher and student, government and citizen. It serves the common good.

### Apply

Invite the participants to summarize their understanding of this Church teaching.

### Pray

Lead a meditation on Nazareth (see *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, pages 383–384), or pray using the Scripture on the participant resource.